

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the application as follows:

1. Canceled

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17. (Currently Amended) A disposable garment for the care and prevention of wounds on a target area of the body of a user, the garment comprising:

an absorbent portion having a fluid pervious inner sheet, a fluid impervious outer sheet and at least one layer of absorbent material positioned between the inner and outer sheets; and

a wound care and prevention portion coupled peripherally to and independent of being embedded in the absorbent portion, the wound care and prevention portion including means for reducing pressure, friction and shear that can irritate or cause ulcers resulting from prolonged contact between the target area of the body of the user and a chafing surface,

said means for reducing pressure, friction and shear having an array of removable devices forming a generally flexible sheet for supporting an area of the body of the user, each device removably coupled to at least one other device, at least one of the devices being a device that is selectably removable from the array in order to define a space in the sheet which approximates the size of the target area on the body of the user.

18. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 17, wherein the removable devices are suspension devices.

19. Canceled

20. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 17, wherein each suspension device has opposing first and second surfaces, and wherein the first surface is configured for contacting the body of the user.

21. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 17 wherein the array of devices are configured to support the target area of the user's body without contacting the target area.

22. The disposable garment of claim 17, further comprising a plurality of straps for removably attaching the garment to the body of the user.

23. (Previously Amended) The disposable garment of claim 20, further comprising a backing removably coupled to the second surface of the devices and connected to the outer sheet of the absorbent portion.

24. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 17, further comprising elastic leg bands connected to at least one of the inner and outer sheets.

25. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 17, wherein the devices are gas-filled bubbles.

26. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 23, wherein the backing includes one of a hook material and a loop material and the second surface of the devices includes the other of the hook material and the loop material.

27. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 17, further comprising a dye for marking an approximate outline of the target area onto the first surface of the devices.

28. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 17, wherein the space within the sheet is defined by the devices removed from the array.

29. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 17, where the garment is a diaper.

30. (Previously Amended) The disposable garment of claim 17, wherein the wound care portion is configured to protect the buttocks and a portion of the back area of the user.

31. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 25, further comprising a pricking device for selectably deflating at least one of the bubbles.

32. (Currently Amended) A disposable garment for the care and prevention of wounds on a target area of the body of a user, the garment comprising:

an absorbent portion having a fluid pervious inner sheet, a fluid impervious outer sheet and at least one layer of absorbent material positioned between the inner and outer sheets; and

a wound care and prevention portion coupled peripherally to and independent of being embedded in the absorbent portion, the wound care and prevention portion including means for

reducing pressure, friction and shear that can irritate or cause ulcers resulting from prolonged contact between the target area of the body of the user and a chafing surface,

said means for reducing pressure, friction and shear having an array of bubbles forming a generally flexible sheet for supporting an area of the body of the user, each bubble having opposing first and second surfaces, the first surface configured for contacting the body of the user.

33. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 32 wherein the bubbles are gas-filled bubbles.

34. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 32 wherein the bubbles are selectably deflatable from the array in order to define a recess within the sheet which approximates the size of the target area on the body of the user.

35. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 34 wherein, the array of gas-filled bubbles is configured to support the target area of the body of the user without contacting the target area.

36. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 32, further comprising a pricking device for selectably deflating at least one of the bubbles.

37. (Original) The disposable garment of claim 34, further comprising a dye for marking an approximate outline of the target area onto the array of bubbles.

38. (Withdrawn) A disposable garment for the care and prevention of wounds on a target area of the body of a user, the garment comprising:

an absorbent portion having a fluid pervious inner sheet, a fluid impervious outer sheet and at least one layer of absorbent material positioned between the inner and outer sheets; and

a wound care and prevention suspension portion coupled to the absorbent portion, the

suspension portion formed of means for reducing pressure, friction and shear that can irritate or cause ulcers resulting from prolonged contact between the target area of the body of the user and a chafing surface,

said means for reducing pressure, friction and shear having a resilient, cushionable material for supporting an area of the body of the user.

39. (Withdrawn) The disposable garment of claim 38, wherein the cushionable material is non-allergic, medical grade foam.

40. (Withdrawn) The disposable garment of claim 39, wherein the suspension portion is configured for the easy removal of at least one segment of the suspension portion in order to define a space in the suspension portion which approximates the size of the target area on the body of the user.

41. (Withdrawn) The disposable garment of claim 40 wherein the suspension portion is configured to support the target area of the user's body without contacting the target area.

42. (Withdrawn) The disposable means of claim 40, wherein the suspension portion includes perforations to facilitate the removal of the at least one segment from the suspension portion by hand without the use of tools.

43. (Withdrawn) The disposable garment of claim 40, further comprising a dye for marking an approximate outline of the target area onto the suspension portion.

44. (Withdrawn) A method of applying a system for the care and prevention of wounds on a target area of the body of a patient comprising the steps of:

identifying the target area on the body of the patient;

obtaining means for reducing pressure, friction and shear that can irritate or cause

ulcers resulting from prolonged contact between the target area of the body of the user and a chafing surface comprising a sheet formed of removable devices;

selectably removing at least one device from the sheet to define a space which approximate the target area; and

securing the sheet to the body of the patient such that the sheet supports the target area away from the chafing surface reducing prolonged contact between the target area and the body of the patient.

45. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 44 and further comprising the step of:  
marking the sheet to form an approximate outline of the target area.

46. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 44 and further comprising the steps of:  
applying a dye to the body of the patient to approximately outline the target area;  
placing the sheet in contact with the dye and the body of the patient to form a mark of the outline on the sheet;

separating the sheet from the patient; and  
using the mark transposed on the sheet from the dye to determine which devices to remove.

47. (Withdrawn) The method claim 44 and further comprising the step of:  
applying tape to the sheet at the perimeter of the space.

48. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 44 wherein the sheet is coupled to an absorbent portion having a fluid pervious inner sheet, a fluid impervious outer sheet and at least one layer of absorbent material disposed between the inner and outer sheets.

49. (Withdrawn) A method of applying a system for the care and prevention of

wounds on a target area of the body of a user comprising the steps of:

identifying the target area on the body of the user;

obtaining means for reducing pressure, friction and shear that can irritate or cause ulcers resulting from prolonged contact between the target area of the body of the user and a chafing surface comprising a sheet formed having gas-filled bubbles coupled to a backing;

selectably deflating at least one of the gas-filled bubbles from the sheet to define a recess which approximate the target area; and

securing the sheet to the body of the user such that the sheet supports the target area away from the chafing surface to reduce prolonged contact between the target area and the body of the user.

50. (Currently Amended) A disposable garment for the care and prevention of wounds on a target area of the body of a user, the garment comprising:

an absorbent portion; and

a wound care and prevention portion coupled peripherally to and independent of being embedded in the absorbent portion, the wound care and prevention portion including means for reducing pressure, friction and shear that can irritate or cause ulcers resulting from prolonged contact between the target area of the body of the user and a chafing surface,

said means for reducing pressure, friction and shear having an array of removable devices forming a generally flexible sheet for supporting an area of the body of the user, each device removably coupled to at least one other device, at least one of the devices being a device that is selectably removable from the array in order to define a space in the sheet which approximates the size of the target area on the body of the user.

51. (Previously Added ) The disposable garment of claim 50, wherein the devices are at least one of gas-filled bubbles, a pad, a pillow, and a cushion.

52. (Previously Added) The disposable garment of claim 50, wherein the sheet has opposing first and second surfaces with the first surface configured for contacting the body of the user and perforations between at least some of the array of removable devices, and further comprising a backing removably coupled to the second surface and connected to an outer sheet of the absorbent portion,

said backing includes one of a hook material and a loop material and the second surface includes the other of the hook material and the loop material, and

said backing having perforations which are in communication with the perforations between at least some of the array of removable devices to enable air to flow through the wound care and prevention portion of the disposable garment.